

Interpretative issues in Acts 9.32-11.18

1. Our section begins in the town of **Lydda**. What do we know about this city?
2. In 9.33-34, how does the name "**Aeneas**" help us to interpret this scene?
3. What is the role of **Joppa**, mentioned 10x in Acts (all in this section starting at 9.36) in this passage?
4. Does the **Tabitha/Dorcas story** relate backward to Aeneas or forward to Cornelius?
5. What issues are raised—and for whom—with Peter at the house of Simon, a tanner?
6. What do we know about **Caesarea** and how it plays a role in this story?
7. In 10.1-2, where does **the description of Cornelius** place him on the spectrum of possible believers? Was there a category of "God-fearers," and if so, how did they fit between "us" and "them"?
8. What might be the relationship between **acts of charity/donations** (9.36; 10.2, 4, 31, Gk, *eleemosunes*) and what follows?
9. **Cornelius' experience is reported by the narrator in 10.1-8, then repeated** at 10.22, 30-33 (and 11.11-14, which we'll explore later). What do the differences in the accounts tell us?
10. **In 10.9-17, Peter has a vision of a sheet filled with animals**, which he will interpret as about people. What connects the vision with the interpretation?
11. How are we to understand the **categories "unclean" and "common"** (10.14-15) in relation to animals and to people?
12. What **Hebrew Scripture passages where we find animals as people/nations** help us to understand Peter's vision?
13. **Acts 10 contains an enormous amount of talk about "sending" and movement** from one place to another. How does that emphasis help us to understand the outcome?
14. On their meeting, **Cornelius falls at Peter's feet to worship him**, but Peter tells him to stand up. How would this be understood both from a Judean and a Roman perspective?
15. In 10.28, **Peter says it is *athemiton* (NRSV, "unlawful" but others as "taboo") to "associate" (*kollasthai*) or "visit" (*proserchesthai*) a "foreigner" (*allophulō*)**. What translation options help to clarify what's going on here?
16. What **Hebrew Scriptures texts support or refute his view**? What does this tell us about how Luke characterizes Peter here?
17. In 10.34, Peter announces his new understanding that **God "shows no partiality"**. Is this "news" to all or just to Peter?
18. How does **Peter's speech in 10.36-43** speak to the issues at hand? Does it?
19. How is the **"little Pentecost" at 10.44-46** similar or different from the one in Acts 2?
20. In 10.45, we hear for the first time of **"the faithful of the circumcision"** and again at 11.2. Who do these people represent and what is the issue they are concerned about?
21. How does **Peter's "step by step" explanation in 11.4-16** repeat or change what we heard earlier about his own experience?
22. How does **Peter's repeat of his encounter with Cornelius' men** differ from earlier reports? Why might he reshape it this way?